

OCT 21 1999



Fred E. Humes
Director

Statement for the Record
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Geologic Repository for the Disposal of
Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste
Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada

The establishment of a national repository for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste is an important national priority, and it is my pleasure to comment on your draft Environmental Impact Statement.

My name is Ernest S. Chaput, and I represent the Economic Development Partnership of Aiken, South Carolina. The Department of Energy's Savannah River Site is located in Aiken County, South Carolina. For the past several years the Partnership has evaluated DOE programs for consistency with community expectations, and it is in that context that I speak today.

The establishment and operation of a national repository by the Federal government fulfills a critical commitment to the citizens of South Carolina and the nation. The Federal government has the obligation to the nation to close the back end of the commercial power nuclear fuel cycle by providing a final repository for spent nuclear fuel. The Federal government also has a special obligation to the citizens of states which hosted Department of Energy defense activities to provide a final repository for radioactive wastes which were generated as we fought and won the cold war. South Carolina has over 30 millions of high level liquid wastes which resulted from the production of plutonium and tritium for national defense purposes. These wastes are currently being vitrified and stored on an interim basis on the SRS pending transfer to a national repository. Fulfilling these commitments by establishing and operating a national repository is long overdue, and we support the expeditious approval of Yucca Mountain as the nations geologic repository for spent nuclear fuels and high-level wastes.

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The analysis included in your Draft EIS also supports approval of the Yucca Mountain repository. When compared to the "no action" alternatives, there is a greatly reduced impact upon the combination of worker and public health and safety and the environment by implementing the proposed action when compared to taking no action. The option of not taking action now and creating a significant health, safety and environmental hazard for future generations is totally unacceptable.

3 [We note with concern that the currently approved Yucca Mountain capacity is less than projected requirements for long-term geologic storage. We believe that this deficiency should be addressed now and recommend that the Department of Energy expedite efforts to develop and implement the promising Accelerator Transmutation of Waste (ATW) concept. While ATW is not a viable option in the short term to replace the necessary Yucca Mountain repository, it does have the longer-term potential to reduce the need for additional geologic repository space by eliminating long-lived fission products and significantly reducing the volume of wastes to be stored.]

1 cont. In summary, [we believe that the Federal government has a responsibility to the American people to close the back end of the commercial nuclear fuel cycle and has a particular responsibility to the citizens of South Carolina to establish a permanent repository for high-level radioactive wastes generated in support of our national defense. Yucca Mountain can safely meet both of these needs.] We support approval of Yucca Mountain as the nation's geologic repository and recommend its completion at the earliest possible date. [We also recommend that the Department of Energy aggressively proceed with development of the Accelerator Transmutation of Waste concept to establish, in the longer-term, an alternate means for safely treating and disposing of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive wastes.]

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this very important activity.